

Information about Fluoride Intake for Infants and Young Children

On November 8, 2006 the American Dental Association (ADA) released their “Interim Guidance on Fluoride Intake for Infants and Young Children.” This guidance is in response to recent studies which raise the possibility that infants could receive a greater than optimal amount of fluoride through liquid concentrate or powdered baby formula mixed with water containing fluoride. Recent evidence suggests that mixing powdered or liquid infant formula concentrate with fluoridated water on a regular basis may increase the chance of a child developing the faint white markings of very mild or mild enamel fluorosis. This occurs on baby and permanent teeth while they are forming under the gums. Typically, very mild or mild fluorosis is barely noticeable, if noticed at all. Aside from these markings, enamel fluorosis causes no other effects. The ADA recommendations to reduce fluoride intake from reconstituted infant formula include: 1) breastfeeding babies rather than using infant formula; 2) mixing concentrated or powdered infant formula with distilled fluoride-free water only; 3) using ready-to-feed infant formula during the first 12 months; 4) using tap water with optimum fluoride levels only occasionally.

It is important to note that water fluoridation remains a necessary, cost-effective public health action that has important health benefits. The ADA recommendations are specific to parents, caregivers and healthcare professionals of infants who may consume formula. The ADA continues to support community water fluoridation as the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay.

For more information:

http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/positions/statements/fluoride_infants.asp

http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/topics/fluoride_letter_interim.pdf

http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/infant_formula.htm